

AERIAL MAIL ROUTES.

By Frederic J. Haskin.

The United States is going to have an aerial mail service soon. Early in May the Post Office Department advertised for bids on an aeroplane service throughout Alaska, in answer to which the owner of three powerful aeroplanes is now on his way from the Alaskan gold fields to close a contract. This man's bid, which is for \$48,500 a year, was accepted by the department for the reason that it was the only one submitted. The demand for aircraft and skilled operators in Europe is so great that the comparatively small number in the army and navy, are allowed to remain in this country. A bid was also requested for a similar service from New Bedford, Mass., to Nantucket, R. I., but so far no one has offered to undertake it.

The question of an aerial mail service in this country has been in process of agitation ever since 1910, when a mail route was proposed by aeroplane to the New York post office from the steamship Kaiserin Victoria, which was being sent to Europe. The department made no less than sixty-seven attempts were made to show the practicability of carrying mail through the air. The proposition was the subject of so much popular interest that it was adopted by various municipal boards of trade as an advertising feature. The plan was to secure permission from the government to carry the mail by aeroplane only once a week for a certain number of days, thus attracting great crowds of people to witness the phenomenon and incidentally accelerate business in the town. The space of six years these demonstrations proved so uniformly successful that the department decided to adopt the plan in stretches of country where the usual method of transportation was expensive and difficult.

Under these circumstances, the first choice was Alaska, where the mail is carried by dog-sled, which is costly and inadequate. During the winter months no mail at all is transmitted in the northern interior, and the last mail sled in the fall and the first mail sled in the spring. Events to be celebrated like the Fourth of July and Christmas. The present contract for aeroplane service at \$48,500 is \$25,000 more than the dog-sled system costs, but the aeroplane will carry 1,000 pounds of mail, as compared to the sled's 200, and bring Seward, Nome and other cities three weeks nearer the United States. In addition to mail, the postal aeronaut expects to run a passenger and express service.

There are many sections of the country that would be greatly benefited by a swift mail service. It is practically impossible except by air because the route would lie over mountains and desert. From Scout Mountain, near Shale, Cal., for example, the distance is not over fifty miles as the crow flies, but over the mountain range that separates them it takes two days for the mail to travel. As important oil interests are located in each of these towns, the slowness of the mail is a great hardship.

An aeroplane could make the distance from Gallup, N. M., to the Indian agency at Keams Canyon, Ariz., which is less than a hundred miles, in a little more than an hour, while the present system it requires two days for the mail to arrive by wagon. Again, Phoenix and Globe, Ariz., are only seventy miles apart, but a journey of twenty-four hours lies between them. The rapid development of the aeroplane is watched with much interest in these places, where a national aerial mail service would be distinctly welcomed.

The great stumbling blocks in the way of a national aerial corps of mail carriers are the tremendous cost of such a system and the attitude of Congress, which builds ten-thousand-dollar post offices in remote districts, not in direct line of communication, but which cannot see the necessity of buying aircraft either for the mail, the army or the navy.

It has been estimated by the Aero Club of America that on the day President Wilson's note went forth to Germany, there were only three up-to-date and efficient aeroplanes in the United States Navy, and only twice as many in the army. At the beginning of the war, Germany had an aerial fleet of over 1,000 craft, manned by trained experts, while England had nearly as many, leading in speed machines, and France possessed a fleet of 600 after discarding many obsolete models. Now, through the efforts of the Aero Club of America, two aviation schools have been established—one at Dayton, Ohio, and one at San Diego and one in Texas—and a fund is being raised by patriotic Americans to provide the state militia with flying squadrons.

There have been several reports recently that the importance of the aeroplane in the European war has been greatly exaggerated, but these are hardly borne out by the speed with which the European powers are importing aircraft. American factories are working full capacity. Predictions of a future aerial battle at Eben have long been current, and it is a well known fact that all the belligerents are spending large sums in increasing their aerial forces.

According to one military authority, the war will end when one nation succeeds in inventing a weapon that is capable of destroying the enemy's aerial power.

Under these circumstances, it is impossible for one army to make a single move that is not spied upon by the other.

Spied on by Opponent. A German commander decided to flank a hundred thousand men against what he is informed by his air scout is a weak position. The French army is immediately apprised of it by its airmen and moves up men to meet the situation, forming a deadlock. With the air scouts flying overhead—difficult targets of the most proficient marksmen—a surprise attack is out of the question.

The work of the air scout is probably the most dangerous of all the dangerous work of war, since the only protection of the aeroplane is usually its speed. The men in the trenches are not to be envied, and duty on a battleship is not by any means a sinecure, but the sensation of peering down at the enemy, who is engaged in firing projectiles thousands of feet into the air with the idea of hitting you, could hardly be termed "sport," as one optimistic Englishman described it. Yet if you were an air scout you would doubtless take the same risks and proudly count the fresh bullet holes in the wings of your machine every day together with the rest of the flying corps, as is the custom in Europe. Among his other requirements, which include watching a barograph, speed gauge, a topographical map before him and a compass, while keeping an eye on the enemy, listening to the rhythm of his motor and acting quickly in an emergency, the air scout is not allowed to have nerves.

The only way to combat his vigilance, besides firing at him from the anti-aircraft gun, is to trick his eye. Thus the English army, on perceiving a German dirigible approaching, dropped their kits and fled into an adjacent wood. The Germans, thinking the kits were men, opened a tremendous bombardment upon them, destroying the kits, but leaving the soldiers un-

harmd. Another time the Germans made a peaceful retreat by means of several dummy trenches displaying German helmets, which were reported as the German army by a French air scout.

A British air scout flying high above the German lines one day was greatly surprised by the constant arrival along a certain road of thousands of provision wagons. They were still arriving when the German guns opened fire upon him and he was compelled to return to his own lines. The next, however, he was back on scouting duty and discovered the mystery of the numerous wagons. They were being emptied of soldiers carefully hidden underneath the provisions.

Most of the aeroplanes now carry wireless apparatus with which in battle they direct the fire of the artillery far below. Formerly smoke bombs were used in the day time and colored lights at night, while the Germans dropped silver balls to direct the firing, but now the officer talks to the men by wireless while the pilot guides the machine.

The aeroplane as a destructive weapon has not yet become formidable, although occasionally it has been able to do considerable damage, for the reason that it is still in an experimental stage, cannot be added without the sacrifice of speed. A two-hundred-horsepower engine is not any more than sufficient to run a large and heavy craft. One German model of an armored biplane, with a capacity for twenty men, four machine guns, anti-aircraft gun and motor by eight 180-horsepower engines, has so far outstripped all other inventions in its weight-carrying capacity and speed, but others of far greater possibilities are now in process of construction. It is the slow-moving dirigible at present, however, which hovers over the enemy and destroys him; the aeroplane is too rapid and light to do more than direct the fire and scout and defend itself. It is the aeroplane destroyer for which the war waits to end.

While the aeroplane is demonstrating its value as an agent of war in Europe, it is developing commercial value in the United States. It is to carry the mail, when the war is over the nations of Europe with their hundreds of aeroplanes will probably follow the example of the United States, which has established the first aerial mail service in the history of the world.

EL ARISH PROMINENT IN HISTORY OF ANCIENTS

El Arish, one of the world's forgotten places until the English bombardment it a few days ago, is the subject of a war geography bulletin issued by the National Geographic Society, which says:

"With its large square fort and battlemented walls, El Arish presents a much more formidable and imposing appearance, viewed from the Mediterranean, to the north, and from the Desert et-Tih, to the south, than its importance has warranted in recent years. Formerly a populous halting place for the numerous caravans following the 'short desert route' from Egypt to Syria, its trade has waned materially since the completion of modern railway connections with Jaffa, Port Said and Alexandria. The town clings to the banks of the Vadi-el-Arish, a stream which becomes a small torrent after every rain. It is more than a hundred miles southwest of Jerusalem and a slightly shorter distance from the Suez canal, which lies to the west.

"The recent hostilities in this area revive a host of historical associations dating as far back as the time of the Pharaohs, when this town was a place of exile for political prisoners, its ancient name being Rhinokolura. Its present name is supposed to be derived from the cotton which obtained here of 'cutting off the noses' of malefactors whose death sentences had been commuted.

Raphia Lies to East.

"Some thirty miles to the east of El Arish, on the Egyptian-Syrian boundary, lies ancient Raphia, now called Er-Rafa, where Josephus tells us that the Roman conqueror Titus made his first stop on his march against Jerusalem. Here also Sargon overwhelmed the Egyptians in the eighth century before the Christian era, and 600 years later there was fought on the same sands the famous battle between Ptolemy Philopator and Antiochus, when the charging elephants of both armies played such a spectacular role. Of these great hosts, which have been introduced into Syrian and Greek warfare after Alexander's conquests in India, with a trumpeting dash of the opposing armored mountains of flesh, Ptolemy's forces commanding seventy-three of

the terror-inspiring chargers, while Antiochus sent into the fray 102. With the first onslaught practically of Ptolemy's elephants was captured, yet he won the day.

"El Arish fell before Napoleon's Egyptian army in September, 1798, the credit for the city's fall being given to France's great general, Kleber, commander of the vanguard, which also seized Jaffa and Gaza. It was during this campaign that Napoleon committed the great atrocity at Jaffa, shooting those prisoners whom he could neither guard nor feed, yet whom he feared to release.

"After Napoleon's departure Kleber concluded a convention at El Arish with the English admiral, Sir William Sidney Smith, whereby the French were to receive safe transport back to France. This agreement was revoked by Lord Keith, however, whereupon Kleber, with 10,000 men, marched to Heliopolis and administered a crushing defeat to the Turks, who outnumbered him 6 to 1. Had not a fanatic assassinated the great French tactician the day that Napoleon won the battle of Marengo the fate of French arms in Egypt might have been different.

"The Admiral Smith whose agreement with Kleber was disallowed was the same British officer who had caused the signal defeat of Napoleon before the walls of Acre, a relief work for which a grateful parliament voted him an annuity of a thousand pounds.

"The center of the town of El Arish is a granite wall with an inscription in hieroglyphics, perpetuating a curious legend about the Egyptian god, Shu. A short distance beyond the walls the traveler is shown the ruins of the building in which Baldwin I, one of the crusader kings of Jerusalem, died in 1118, after an unsuccessful attack on Egypt."

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Summer Underwear for Every Member of the Family

Note the Special Sale Prices—And Secure Supplies Here for the Season—Tomorrow.

Men's Shop

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Athletic Underwear

50c Grade, 39c

The well known nainsook shirts and drawers.

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Nainsook Union Suits, long since recognized the best.

Women's Ribbed Union Suits

Street Floor of New Palais Royal Building—Entrance on Eleventh Street.

Lot 1 25c 39c Grade, 25c Lot 2 39c 50c Grade, 39c Lot 3 59c 75c Grade, 59c Lot 4 95c \$1.25 Grade, 95c

Light in weight, glove-fitting but elastic, the ideal summer undergarments. All styles in all sizes. See the many tables full, in main aisle, facing G street door.

25c for Women's Suits, some with tight knees, some umbrella style, some are envelope. All sizes.

39c for Women's Suits, with band top, tight knees and loose; lace trimmed. Regular and extra sizes.

59c for Women's Suits—Richelieu, Athena and Kayser makes; all styles, in white and pink. All sizes.

95c for Women's "Merode" Suits, with glove silk top and tight knees; white and pink. All sizes.



Juvenile Summer Underwear

Street Floor of New Palais Royal Building—Entrance on Eleventh Street.

THREE SPECIAL LOTS:

25c

Special at 25c are boys' as well as girls' Union Suits—Swiss ribbed and nainsook in sizes 2 to 14 years.

39c

Special at 39c are 50c grade of Boys' Athletic Union Suits—of crossbar nainsook—in sizes 6 to 14 years.

50c

Union Suits, with buttons—as in the illustration here—for her skirt or his knickerbockers. Sizes 2 to 12 years.



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All White Meat—A Brand You Know.

1/2 Size Cans 12c

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Pet Milk, 4 1/2c and 9c

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Wesson Oil, Can 23c

Crisco 25c

One Quart Grape Juice 25c

Beaufort Ginger Ale, 2 bottles for 15c

Other Extras for This Week

Olive Oil 7 1/2c

Re-Umberto, Bottle 5c

Morton's Hitting Salt 10c

Sanitary Starch 3 lbs. for 10c

Black and White Matches, Doz. 15c

Curtice Bros. Blue Label Potted Ham or Chicken, 1/4 lb. 12 1/2c

Our Sanitary Butter

Coming fresh from the creamery, has never been better. Quality is such that it will please the most exacting.

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Rather a broad statement, but SANITARY Butter, like everything else we sell, is guaranteed to please, and money will be cheerfully refunded if you are not entirely satisfied.

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Two brands which you know. For this week we offer at a very low price
Your Pride of Montgomery Choice R. & C.

6-lb. Bag 19c

12-lb. Bag 37c

24-lb. Bag 73c

JUNE SALE---Not Yet But Soon

The Palais Royal June Sale of lingerie—like the May Sale—begins only after all previous stock is disposed of. A thousand or so garments remain from the May Sale, regular patrons know them and will shut their eyes to the tossed and tumbled appearance, knowing that each was a full value at the late price and the summer season's best bargains at the reduced prices.

48c

Were to 75c.

69c

Were to \$1.25.

89c

Were to \$1.50.

The combination garments, including the new styles of envelope chemises and the separate gowns and skirts, are in the lots reduced to 69c and 89c. The ordinary chemises, corset covers and drawers, equally good, are in the lots at 48c for choice.

On Palais Royal Street Floor Tables, Near the Elevators.

Lingerie Fit for the Bride, at \$1.98 and \$2.98

Garments Many Know of As Good Values at \$3.98 Are Included—These on Third Floor Tables.

It was only last week that prospective June brides were here. Not a few Trousseaux were "broken," to accommodate those needing fewer garments than in a full trousseau. Thus we have Separate Gowns, Skirts and various Combination Garments, some of them dreams of beauty, now reduced to only \$1.98 and \$2.98 for choice.

On Palais Royal Third Floor Tables, Rear of Elevators.

Friday---Wanted Silks Far Below Regular Prices---Tomorrow

Not Remnants, Not Old Styles, Not Doubtful Quality. On Second Floor—Rear of Elevators.

Satin Messaline, 85c

Guaranteed \$1.00 to \$1.25 Values.

30 to 36 inches wide; heavy and lustrous; in all the wanted light and dark colors, including white and black.

Note that 85c per yard is really a special price—for tomorrow only.

Tub Silks, 75c

Guaranteed a Best \$1.00 Value.

32 to 36 inches wide; in a handsome assortment of colored stripes; on white grounds; for summer wash dresses, waists and various patterns for men's shirts. All will launder perfectly. Friday, special, 75c yard.

Palais Royal Second Floor—6 Elevators.

Summer Corduroy, 79c

\$1.00 Hollow-Cut Corduroy, 79c Yard.

32 and 36 inches wide; good, serviceable quality; for suits, sport coats and separate skirts; in shades of rose, delft, sand, tipary and white. Friday, special, 79c yard.

Palais Royal Second Floor—6 Elevators.

Wool Dress Goods at Special Prices For Tomorrow Only

Storm Serge, 50c

Quality Standard at 85c Per Yard.
50 inches wide; good, serviceable quality for hard wear, suits, dresses or skirts; in shades of brown, myrtle, navy, Belgian and black. Friday, special, 50c yard.

Palais Royal Second Floor—6 Elevators.

Cream Serge, 89c

Better Than \$1.00 Quality, Worth \$1.15.
50 inches wide; Double-warp, Hard-finished Cream Storm Serge; absolutely all wool; will shed dust and will not wrinkle. For coats, suits and skirts. Friday, special, 89c yard.

Palais Royal Second Floor—6 Elevators.

Shepherd Checks, 65c

This Quality Cannot Be Duplicated Less Than 89c.
54 inches wide; dressed and skirts; in various style checks of black and white.

Please Note—Special at 65c yard for tomorrow only.

Palais Royal Second Floor—6 Elevators.